enabled consumer service centres, and on projects for improvement of distribution networks.

Chairperson of CERC

1800. SHRI EKANATH THAKUR: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission's (CERC) office has been functioning without a Chairperson for almost a year now;

whether it is fact that this is at a time when the country is in the midst of its most ambitious power project addition programme, 78,000 Megawatt by 2012, and requires investments over $100 billion in the sector; and

if so, the steps Government proposes to take to appoint Chairpersons of CERC?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SUSH1LKUMAR SHINDE): (a) to (c) The post of Chairperson of the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) fell vacant on 24.03.2007. The Electricity Act, 2003 provides that the Chairperson and Members of CERC shall be appointed by the Central Government on the recommendations of the Selection Committee as stipulated in the Act.

Accordingly, a reference was made to the Selection Committee under the provisions of the Act for giving its recommendation for appointment to the above post. The recommendation of the Selection Committee was examined and the prosposal for appointment to the post has been submitted for orders of the Competent Authority.

Issues **relating to power sector**

1801. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:
SHRIMATISUPR1YASULE:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

whether, in a meeting held recently under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister to discuss the issues relating to power sector it was agreed unanimously, that the unduly long time for environmental clearance would trip Government's efforts to quickly ramp up generation capacity through ultra Mega Power Projects;

what are the other main points discussed in the meeting and to what extent these steps would help in removing all the hurdles in the way of implementing the power projects; and

what concrete measures Government has taken to see that all power projects are completed within the time schedule?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SHSHILKUMAR SHINDE): (a) and (b) Power Sector related issues were reviewed in a meeting chaired by the Prime Minister. In this meeting held on 18.1.2008, *inter alia,* issues related to expeditious environment clearance in respect of Ultra Mega Power Projects, significantly reducing the time-frame for grant of environment/forest clearance for power and mining projects meant for power